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The Importance of Wallpaper

"Mum..." This time, the child tugs upon the sleeve of her mother's beige cardigan.

The heat, here in this crowded department store, is becoming unbearable. Oppressive. Amy can barely breathe. And the nausea is worse. Much worse.

"Be quiet, Amy!" Focus intent, upon the endless rows of wallpaper. Yet another roll selected. All are pastel green. Little to differentiate one from the next.

But at least the sickness seems to be passing.

At last, Mum appears to have made a decision. A final selection?

Amy certainly *hopes* that this will be her final selection.

It is when they are finally at the checkout that Amy feels suddenly sick again. More so than ever. Yet again, attempts to attract her mother's attention.

And fails.

And black spots dance in front of her eyes.

And the last sound she hears is of a woman, saying: "Excuse me - your little girl is about to faint!"

Afterwards, Mum blamed Amy. She had refused breakfast that morning, because her little brother was never expected to have that meal. And, even though Amy didn't dislike breakfast, she hadn't understood why Michael didn't have to eat any, and she did.

Mum always *had* blamed Amy for fainting. And for everything else that had, in any respect, gone wrong in their lives. The fainting incident was small, but somehow significant, and definitely typical. Amy's mother was never even partially to blame.

But is wallpaper really so important? Reason enough to ignore your daughter, when she is trying to tell you that she doesn't feel well? Really?

at January 04, 2021

Labels: flash fiction, short story

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June 2021 (1)
March 2021 (1)
January 2021 (2)